

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SAB-01

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARA-06 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9100

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 6402

LIMDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER AND BELL FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: DIPLOMATIC CONFIDENTIALITY

1. I CALLED ON MINISTER BOYD TODAY TO DISCUSS SEVERAL MATTERS (REPORTED SEPTTEL). BUT AT THE OUTSET I TOLD HIM OF MY UNHAPPINESS AND SURPRISE TO HAVE READ IN THIS MORNING'S NEWSPAPERS REPORTS ATTRIBUTED TO PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS DISCUSSING A RECENT CONVERSATION BETWEEN AMBASSADOR BUNKER AND AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ-REVILLA. I TOLD HIM I HAD THOUGHT THAT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE NEGOTIATORS HAD BEEN BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT CONFIDENTIAL. IF THIS UNDERSTANDING WAS MISTAKEN, WE NEEDED TO KNOW IT. I SAID, FURTHER, THAT THE STORY IN QUESTION HAD BEEN AN ACUTE EMBARRASSMENT TO AMBASSADOR BUNKER WHO, AS BOYD WELL KNEW, WAS FRIEND OF PANAMA AND A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF A REASONABLE SETTLEMENT. I SAID THIS WAS NO WAY TO TREAT A FRIEND. I ASKED THE MINISTER IF I COULD BE SURE THAT ANY REMARKS I MADE TO HIM WOULD NOT BE APPEARING IN SOME FORM IN THE NEXT DAY'S PAPERS.

2. BOYD ASSURED ME I HAD NO REASON FOR WORRY ON THAT COUNT. HE WAS UNEASY AND EMBARRASSED. HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN NO THOUGHT WHATSOEVER OF CAUSING ANY PROBLEM FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER WHOM HE DEEPLY RESPECTED. HE SAID LAMELY THAT THE
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ONLY PURPOSE OF THE STORY WAS TO MAKE CLEAR PANAMA'S FRUSTRATION

AT THE LONG DELAY IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO TRY TO NUDGE THE
WHITE HOUSE INTO ACTION THAT HE FELT WOULD HELP US BOTH. I
SAID THAT WHILE I COULD UNDERSTAND PANAMANIAN FEELINGS, I COULD
ONLY TELL HIM THEY HAD CHOSEN A VERY POOR WAY INDEED TO MAKE
THOSE FEELINGS KNOWN. IT WAS NOT, I SAID, THE WAY FRIENDS
DEAL WITH ONE ANOTHER. HE NODDED BUT HAD NOTHING FURTHER TO
SAY AND WE LEFT IT AT THAT.

JORDEN

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